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A PLAN  
FOR  
THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE  
ON  
OCEANS AND COASTS

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10/26/77

U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Office of Coastal Zone Management

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## I CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

A White House Conference on Oceans and Coasts will complement current Executive and Congressional initiatives by providing citizen input on national goals and priorities for development of a comprehensive oceans and coastal policy. A task force from the Department of Commerce has been directed by the President to carry out a "Comprehensive Ocean Policy Study." This study will analyze present policy from the viewpoint of the Federal executive departments and provide the basis for Presidential action on ocean issues. Meanwhile, Congress is arranging hearings on the national oceans policy and programs. Senator Magnuson has announced plans for the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation to conduct oversight hearings that will cover such topics as coastal zone management, scientific research, fishery management, law of the sea, state and local problems, protection of the marine environment, and the organization of Federal oceans programs. The House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee may also hold hearings on the

nation's ocean programs. From these congressional hearings should come a well-developed legislative perspective on the "state of the oceans."

The White House Conference on Oceans and Coasts is the vital third element in the policy-making process. This conference, approved in concept by the President in May, 1977, will consist of four regional conferences and a Washington, D.C. national conference to accomplish the following objectives:

- (1) A critical review by interested citizens and groups representing the grass roots of the Nation of the Comprehensive Ocean Policy Study, the results of Congressional hearings, and present and planned federal ocean and coastal programs.
- (2) Recommendations concerning public programs and private initiatives in the oceans and coastal area -- which efforts should be continued, which should be dropped, and what new steps are needed.
- (3) Proposals to implement the proposed ocean policy that address priorities, funding, and time frames.

The need for grass roots citizen input was recognized by the Stratton Commission in its report of January, 1969, which stated:

A time of decision is here. Multiple pressures force the Nation to turn to the sea, and multiple opportunities await the seaward turning. The time of decision is not for the Federal Government alone, although Federal leadership is essential. State and local governments, industry, academic institutions, and the American people must share in decision and action.

Since that Report was published the full extent of the importance of the oceans and of the adjoining coastal area has become clearer. The worldwide fishing industry has continued its rapid growth, and most coastal nations have extended their offshore fishery jurisdictions. Offshore oil and natural gas currently supply some 22 percent of the world needs. Deep ocean mining appears to be rapidly approaching reality. Inevitably, the sources of potential conflict among those who use and benefit from the oceans increase along with the ability to utilize the vast store of

resources.

The coastal areas also face increasing pressure for utilization. The population of coastal areas is growing at a greater rate than the growth of the populace at large. The development of ocean-oriented industries is creating new demands for providing facilities to cope with this growth. Both the expanding population and burgeoning industry create a need for new energy, transportation, and resource processing facilities. All of these uses of the coastal areas must take place in a way that recognizes the increased demand for both conservation and recreation.

Shortly after taking office, President Carter expressed to Senators Magnuson and Hollings his desire to develop a comprehensive oceans policy by which all concerned may guide their actions. Interested individuals and organizations are coming to recognize that the increased utilization of ocean and coastal regions requires that new rules be developed.

The White House Conference on Oceans and Coasts will provide citizen participation in the development of a course of legislative and administrative actions that will lead to a comprehensive policy on oceans and coastal zones. The results of the various initiatives will differ on some issues and agree on others. Some Conference recommendations

will be accepted and others rejected. But the results of the Conference will allow policy to be formulated from a position of greater overall knowledge of the issues and the public perception of them.



## II CONFERENCE ISSUES

There are as many views of the oceans and coasts as there are constituencies that use them. They are a source of food, a vast transportation system, and a multi-faceted recreational area providing boating, fishing, swimming, diving, water skiing, camping and a host of other activities. The ocean seabed is a storehouse of oil, gas and hard minerals available for American development. The oceans and coasts are also becoming prime locations for siting offshore and coastal structures to facilitate energy and mineral production, transportation, and processing. They are used to dispose of the land's refuse through dumping industrial and municipal wastes in addition to estuarine effluents and atmospheric fall-out. Finally, the oceans are the heat source which drives and controls the world's climate.

The oceans, particularly those adjacent to the United States landmass, are being called upon to provide significant new benefits to the United States. As onshore resources are depleted, industry increasingly looks toward

productive use of the oceans. The new awareness of the capability of the oceans to provide energy, food, minerals, waste disposal, recreation, etc., has focused national attention on a number of problems and conflicts that are occurring with respect to the oceans.

There is a danger, however, in viewing the ocean and coast exclusively in the context of their individual resources or constituent uses. That view ignores the interdependence of the parts. The United States must take a synergistic view of the oceans, for the oceanic systems are more than a sum of the parts. Waste disposal affects living resources and recreation, unrestrained food consumption upsets biological balances, and so on for a wide range of interactions. Therefore, the oceans and coasts must be viewed as a set of tightly inter-related resources.

For example, the Georges Bank area off Cape Cod is a relatively shallow ocean area which has traditionally been a rich and productive fishing ground. Today, conflicting plans for the use of Georges Bank pose serious policy questions. The area's potential for significant new oil and gas production has raised concern over the impact of that activity on the traditional fishing. Concern is being expressed over the potential incompatibility of structures

in the sea with the traditional needs of navigation. The recent ARGO MERCHANT catastrophe adjacent to Georges Bank has again focused attention on the potential effect of oil spills on beaches and shore life. It also further accentuated the significance of our lack of basic knowledge regarding the effects of oceanic oil pollution. The possibility of sand and gravel extraction has raised still other issues regarding potential conflicts in use.

Similar types of issues, with different mixes of conflicts, can be found in other coastal and ocean areas.

The emerging problems of ocean and coastal use are now becoming more widely understood and apparent to the public, and action is needed in order to resolve them. The White House Conference will provide a forum for citizen involvement in these vital decisions. Many of the specific problems to be addressed will be identified in the Comprehensive Ocean Policy Study and the Congressional hearings. It is not possible at this point to predict the outcome of these efforts or put together a comprehensive list of ocean and coastal conflicts. The conference staff will attempt to identify and describe the major issues and present them for consideration to the participants, who can be expected to focus on some, minimize others, and raise new

cases the staff did not consider. This process will result in a list of problems and issues that can be fully developed and discussed in the context of the following issue areas:

1. National Security

To identify the policy requirements to preserve the U.S. global advantage.

2. Living Resource Utilization

To improve the development and management of ocean living resources, achieving appropriate balances between commercial and recreational user needs and resource protection.

3. Mineral Development

To facilitate development of a strategic and commercial supply of minerals from the oceans at reasonable economic and social cost.

4. Energy Production and Distribution

To insure a balance between supplying the Nation's energy needs and the societal costs of maintaining that supply.

5. Transportation

To develop the most cost-effective alternatives for distributing goods through the oceans and adjacent seas of the U.S., taking into account environmental considerations and national security.

## 6. Recreation

To achieve a balance between the development and enhancement of recreational opportunities and the needs for coastal community development.

## 7. Waste Disposal

To develop standards to control waste disposal in the ocean and coastal zone that strike a balance between costs benefits and take precautions against potential environmental disaster.

Each of these problems areas can be analyzed in terms of certain general categories: conflicts among uses, jurisdictional conflicts, environmental quality impacts, non-renewable resources impacts, and renewable resource impacts. This general framework and method of analysis will provide a rough structure for the White House Conference while allowing the participants considerable latitude in addressing the issues that they find important.

### III PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND PREPARATION

#### A. Delegate Selection

The ideal method of obtaining citizen involvement in the formulation of ocean policy would be to discuss ocean and coastal problems and issues at meetings in a large number of local communities distributed throughout the Nation. Fortunately, much the same results can be obtained at a fraction of the cost and in a much shorter time by holding regional conferences with participants who represent local interests and are willing and able to work with those individuals and groups most affected by ocean policy. This Plan proposes four Regional Conferences of 140 delegates each, followed by a National Conference in Washington composed of 140 representatives from Regional Conferences. The process of selecting delegates has been developed on the basis of the following criteria:

- a. To the maximum extent possible, delegates should represent the people and institutions that will be affected by ocean and coastal policy.
- b. Delegates should be selected to assure balanced representation of five broad categories:

- (1) Private industry

- (2) Public interest
- (3) State and local officials
- (4) Federal officials who are locally based
- (5) Scientific community

- c. Local trade associations and public interest groups should have a lead role in identifying delegates in their categories. This approach will avoid accusations that the delegates were hand-picked by the Conference staff to reach a predetermined result.
- d. A major effort should be made to assure that delegates are not simply the local representatives of national interest groups, but rather people who know and care about local and regional developments and problems. Achievement of this objective will make the Conference something more than a recapitulation of the views regularly expressed by interest groups in Washington.

Delegate selection will be carried out in the following manner to select 140 delegates to each Regional Conference that will satisfy the above criteria:

a. Regional Conference Delegates

The Conference staff will identify the local and regional trade associations interest groups, and associations of state and local officials having an involvement in each of the ocean and coastal issues indicated above to assist in the delegate selection for the relevant categories. Each group will be asked to nominate one delegate and one alternate who will be approved by the Conference Executive Director. He could request another selection if there was solid justification. This process will include efforts to find those interested citizens who are not represented by formal organizations. Since more than one interested association or regional group will normally fit each category, representation of each group will be arranged to the extent possible within the constraint that only four delegates from each category can be chosen for each of the seven issues.

b. National Conference Delegates

Each category of delegates (private industry, public interest, state and local officials, Federal officials, and the scientific community) would be asked at each Regional Conference to elect one representative per issue to attend



the National Conference in Washington. Thus, there would be thirty-five representatives from each Regional Conference, for a total of 140 attending the National Conference.

Additional attendees at the regional and national conferences would include

- (1) Press - A full press list should be developed by staff including newspaper (daily/weekly), radio, television, major magazines and trade journals.
- (2) Observers - delegate peer-group reviewers from the region, including representatives of participating regional interest groups, students and general public.
- (3) VIPs - governor's offices, state legislators, city and county officials, corporate executives, etc.

#### B. Delegate Preparation

Once delegates are selected, the Conference staff will immediately establish communication with them. Depending on the available funds, the Conference staff could bring all delegates to Washington, go to each region or contact delegates by telephone. Continual interaction between the staff and the delegates is essential to allow each to play

and effective role in this effort. In preparation for each Regional Conference delegates will be sent issue papers, sets of questions, and agendas from which to develop their own approaches to the Conference. The delegates will critique the papers, develop options for problem solution and return correct papers and option list to the staff. The staff will prepare revised options papers and again distribute them to the delegates. Final drafts of the papers will then be developed by the staff and circulated for use at the Regional Conference. ¶ The delegates for each issue and category will be encouraged to select a peer review group from the region that will meet at least once prior to the Regional Conference to help the delegates formulate their positions. The peer groups should if possible include representation from each state within the region. The preparatory papers will be reviewed by the peer groups to solicit their opinions on these issues and questions and identify other issues that should be addressed. This consultation would serve the purpose of involving additional individuals and groups within each region, as well as improving the quality of the Conference product. No financial support for the peer group review has been budgeted.

#### IV CONFERENCE OUTPUTS

Several valuable outputs will be generated by the White House Conference. The regional format of the Conference will allow a high level of public participation in, and public visibility to, the development of a comprehensive oceans and coastal policy in the new era of oceans and coastal awareness. The White House Conference on Oceans and Coasts will generate several tangible outputs:

- (1) Issue papers -- In preparation for the conferences, the technical staff will prepare concise but complete background papers related to each major issue addressed by the regional and national conferences.
- (2) In-Depth Legal Analysis -- The conferences will provide an analysis of the Federal statutes that affect the ocean and coastal programs of Federal, state, local, and regional governments, for the purpose of identifying and eliminating overlapping requirements.
- (3) Policy Guidance -- The conferences will help to produce clear statements recommending policy

direction for government and the private sector. These policy directives will be based upon issue papers, concerns of the groups represented by the participants, and conference discussion. Each regional conference will produce its own set of policy statements which will be used as the basis of a national statement at the Washington meeting.

- (4) Program Recommendations -- The conferences will provide opportunities to develop well-considered recommendations on ocean and coastal programs including private sector initiatives that should be sustained by Federal and state efforts.
- (5) Follow-up Activities -- The Conference will identify the requirement from the private and public sectors over the next decade to achieve an integrated management and assistance program for this country's oceans and coastal resources. The Conference may also recommend continuing actions to monitor the implementation of recommendations and policy.
- (6) Media commentary -- The Conference will provide both news and in-depth coverage opportunities

for radio, TV, newspapers, and magazines at the local, regional, and national levels. Editorial and reader comment should also result, leading to wide public exposure of issues.

Aside from these tangible results, the process of convening and conducting the Conference will produce

- o greater public sensitivity to the importance of oceans and coastal areas to the well-being of the nation
- o heightened executive and legislative awareness of citizen perceptions of and attitudes toward current governmental policies and programs dealing with the oceans and coastal areas
- o identification of a reservoir of experts in scientific, policial, social, and economic aspects of oceans and coastal issues whose knowledge can be drawn upon by appropriate legislative committees and executive offices.

Thus, the White House Conference will serve to harness the energy and concerns of the public at large for the

purpose of problem identification, policy alternative formulation, and legislative recommendations on the ocean and coastal issues our nation will be addressing in the immediate future.

## V CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

The Congress, both from its legislative and oversight perspectives, must be afforded full opportunity to participate in the White House Conference throughout the planning and execution process.

The chairmen of the committees below (including respective subcommittees and special study groups) will be encouraged to assign representatives to assist with the definition and refinement of issues and delegate selection and to recommend Congressional delegates for representation at all regional and final conferences. These Congressional delegates will participate in the conferences in the same manner as other delegates.

### Senate:

Appropriations

Commerce, Science and Transportation

Energy and Natural Resources

Environment and Public Works

House:

Appropriations

Interior and Insular Affairs

Interstate and Foreign Commerce

Public Works

Merchant Marine and Fisheries

Science and Technology

Ad Hoc Select Committee on Outer Continental Shelf

Ad Hoc Committee on Energy

In addition, opportunities for participation will be given to Senators and Representatives (and their staffs) who represent coastal state constituencies, serve on committees and subcommittees that have responsibilities for ocean and coastal agencies, or express an interest in participating in some aspect of the Conference.



## VI ADVISORY STRUCTURE

The advisory structure is composed of three elements -- a national advisory committee, a Federal interagency coordination committee, and several technical working groups.

### 1. National Advisory Committee

The purpose of the advisory committee will be to provide guidance and advice concerning all aspects of and during all phases of the White House Conference. The National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere (NACOA) will be asked to serve as the National Advisory Committee to the White House Conference. This approach

- utilizes an existing council oriented toward the same area of interest as the Conference
- conforms with the President's policy against the proliferation of advisory committees
- allows a quick start up of advisory functions without the delay and administrative procedures required to establish a new advisory committee
- saves money because some of the effort can be

simply absorbed by NACOA thus allowing a leaner conference budget.

2. Federal Interagency Coordinating Committee

This committee will be made up of representatives from all concerned

→ Federal departments and agencies. The interagency committee will

- advise the delegates in their review of existing Federal oceans and coastal programs.
- advise the Conference on the positions and policies of their agencies on issues and recommended actions.
- coordinate all appropriate matters within their respective agencies for the Conference.

3. Technical Working Groups

During the preparation phase, working groups of technical experts will assist the Conference staff in refining the issues and preparing the agendas and working papers on which the Conferences will be based. During the conference phase, these experts will continue to assist the Conference staff who then will be participating in their conferences as "executive secretaries" for the cluster of delegates working on particular issues. The working groups could be staffed by hiring on a temporary employee basis, contracting for them under various other contractual

relationships, or by arranging for details from various  
Federal agencies.

## VII CONFERENCE FORMAT

The format used will adhere closely to the "American Assembly" procedure. Modifications are necessary due to the four sequential regional and the Washington meetings and larger delegate participation. This procedure consists of background papers sent to participants in advance, small informal group meetings working from agendas, and a plenary session that adopts a final report of findings and recommendations which is given wide circulation.

Regional Conferences of three days' duration will be held in the four locations, followed by a National Conference in Washington to approve the final report and present it to the President. Attendance at each Regional Conference will total approximately 300 including 140 local and state delegates and 100 observers. In addition, approximately 50 miscellaneous attendees will be provided for (VIPs, press, other guests). The general agenda of each Conference will be as follows:

Day No. 1 - Parallel sessions on oceans and coastal issues

Day No. 2 - "Committee of the Whole" to deal with the  
interrelations among various major issues

Day No. 3 - Drafting recommendations (morning)

Plenary session to adopt recommendations  
(afternoon)

## VIII LOCATIONS AND DATES

### Locations

- (1) Conference locations should have adequate facilities and accommodations and be easily accessible by major transportation means.
- (2) Regional Conferences should represent the maximum number of areas which have unique ocean or coastal characteristics.
- (3) Based on a detailed analysis of potential sites (available in the Coordinator's office), the following locations are recommended:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Site</u>
Atlantic	Boston
Great Lakes	Chicago
Gulf	New Orleans
Pacific	Seattle

### Dates

- (1) The four Regional Conferences will be three days each and will be held between May and July, 1978. The Washington, D.C. National Conference will be two days and be held during August, 1978. Since 1978 is an election year, these general time periods have been

selected to complete the White House Conference prior to major campaign time and the general elections, although there may be some overlap with local and primary elections.

The recommended dates are shown below. Which regional conference would be held on a particular date will depend upon facility availability.

Regional Conferences:

May 4 - 6, 1978, Thursday through Saturday

May 25 - 27, 1978, Thursday through Saturday

June 15 - 17, 1978, Thursday through Saturday

July 13 - 15, 1978, Thursday through Saturday

National Conference:

August 14 - 15, 1978, Monday and Tuesday

These dates allow slightly more than two weeks between Regional Conferences and four weeks between the last Regional Conference and the National Conference in Washington.

## IX COSTS

- (1) Core Staff - number, level
- (2) Rent, Supplies, Printing
- (3) Number of delegates. The Conference plan is based on on 140 delegates at each region meeting or a total of 700 for all five conferences. This is a realistic and manageable number of delegates. Costs could be cut by cutting the number of delegates, but there would be a corresponding loss in expertise, representation and quality.
- (4) Reimbursement for delegates. Delegates will be requested to cost-share with the conference whenever possible. The following expenses will be paid for the delegates:
  - Per Diem: \$35 per day
  - Air Fare: An average of \$250 per delegate  
per conferenceAt least one-third of the regional delegates and one-fourth of the Washington meeting delegates will need financial support.
- (5) Quality of Conference Facilities and Accommodations. Competitive conference locations should have



- the best and most adequate conference facilities and accommodations possible, commensurate with White House sponsorship, at the lowest cost.
- easy accessibility by major transportation means
- ~~being~~ a coastal location if possible

(6) Number of Regional Conferences. Probably eight regional conferences would be the ideal and manageable number to insure a geographical balance. Four conferences represent the minimum to guarantee a regional balance. Three or fewer conferences would not provide an adequate coverage. The cost of having the minimum of four Regional Conferences and the National Conference is \$250,000.

(7) Number of days per Conference. For an adequate regional conference, a minimum of at least three days should be devoted to each meeting, with perhaps five days the best. One or two days per Conference would not provide adequate time. Three days also corresponds with the American Assembly concept. The three-day concept proposed here is again on the cost-conscious "minimum" end of the scale.

Cost Estimates

Conference Staff	\$600,000
Travel - Participants & Staff	350,000
Four Regional Conference and Washington, D.C. Conference	250,000
Advisory Committee	50,000
Printing and other expenses	<u>250,000</u>
Total	\$1,500,000

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